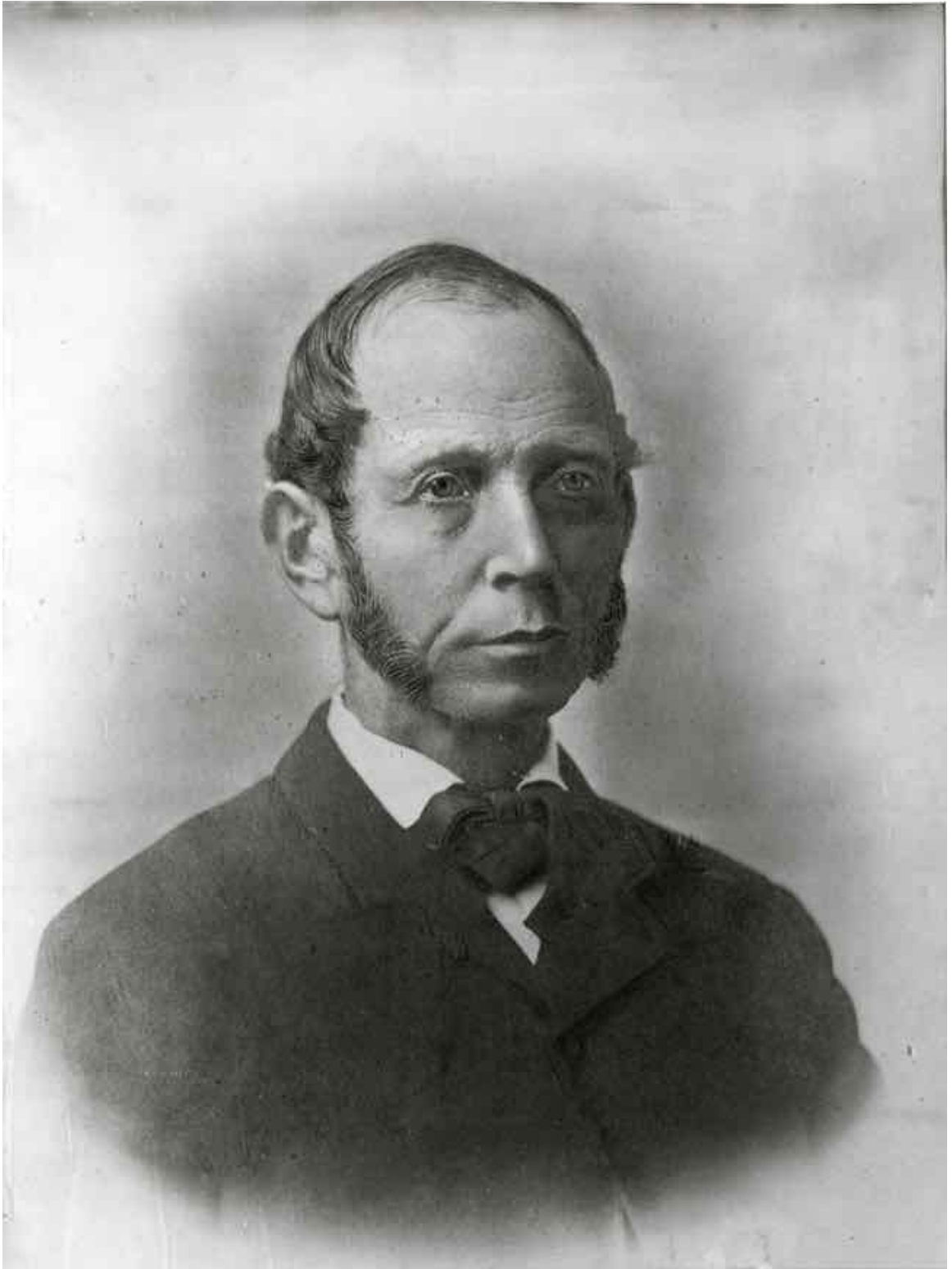


About John Herron.....



By DONALD PRELL

JOHN HERRON was born March 29, 1817 in Carleton-in-Craven, North Yorkshire, England; he died in Los Angeles, California, April 30, 1895. Upon his death, Herron bequeathed (as instructed in his Will dated October 21, 1892) almost \$250,000 to the Art Association of Indianapolis. He stipulated that the money be used to build a museum and art school in his name.

(Based on inflation, \$250,000 in 1895 would be equivalent to \$7,002,734 in 2014.)

The following was published NOVEMBER 20, 1906 on the occasion of the dedication of the John Herron Art Institute by the Art Association of Indianapolis, John Herron Art Institute, A Record 1883-1906, pages 29-34.

AN APPRECIATION OF JOHN HERRON

**Read at the laying of tile corner-stone on November 2nd, 1905,
by Laura Fletcher Hodges**

Very few persons now living can supply the facts bearing upon the antecedents and early life of John Herron. It is fortunate, however, that whatever is important for the purposes of this sketch is accessible through the kindness of his long-time friend and executor, Ambrose P. Stanton, and of his devoted and unselfish relative, Anna E. Turrell.

John Herron was the son of George and Nancy Herron, and was born at Carlton, in Craven, England, on the twenty-ninth day of March, 1817.

England could have been but a name to him, however, for his parents came to America a few months after his birth, and settled near the village of Oxford, Chester county, Pennsylvania, where we hear of him as working a part of the time, as a boy, in a cotton factory and on his father's farm, meanwhile getting such limited instruction as the village school afforded.

Here was the home of the family for thirty years. Later George Herron moved to Cincinnati, but only to live there for a few months, after which the family settled at Mt. Carmel, Indiana, which was to be their home for the rest of their lives.

They were a united and loving household, comprising the father, mother and five children, John, George, Ann, Jane and William, most industriously leading frugal, honest and respected lives.

It is noteworthy that the family seemed one destined to extinction, for of the five children, all died childless or unmarried, the parents dying within a few months of each other, following hence two of their children.

John Herron married Miss Electa D. Turrell, who died in 1892 childless, and no children were born of the marriage of his brother George.

It is not strange that Mr. Herron should decide that the home at Mt. Cannel could no longer be the abiding-place of the poor remnant of the household and that what remained of life for him, his wife and his sister, should be passed elsewhere; that among new surroundings and new pursuits he must forget the toil and the bereavement associated with the old home.

There was now very little need that John Herron should do more than care for the prudent investment of his property, and to supervise and manage matters pertaining to this, for by inheritance and by acquisition he was become a man of fortune and affairs in rather a large way.

His father had been both competent and wise and had so cared for his property as to bequeath to his surviving children, at his death, a considerable fortune, which finally centered in the sole survivor, John Herron. He chose Indianapolis for his residence and brought his wife and sister here in the year 1883, where they made their home until, one after another they passed away, first the sister and then the wife, leaving him, so far as direct blood relation is concerned, with no one nearer to him than some cousins in remote degree.

Mr. Herron found, however, in the person of his wife's niece, a devoted friend who proved herself in her affection and unselfishness all that a daughter could ever be. More than this, one who, when the crucial test was applied, threatened by an awful and appalling death by fire, dragged him from the flames at imminent peril to her own life, so badly burned that he died within a few hours.

Away from home (for the tragedy took place at Los Angeles), among strangers, amid circumstances of themselves demanding an equipoise and self-control to test the strongest man, Miss Turrell was found sufficient and may well treasure through her life the memory of such an act of heroism as attaches to few persons.

John Herron lies buried near the scene of his most active life work, near the graves of his own people, within sight of the fine homestead built by his father, and of the beautiful and dignified approach afforded by the avenue of evergreens which stand on either side the broad driveway.

The bequest of John Herron came as a surprise to the Art Association at a time when its affairs looked blackest and when the struggle to continue the work begun more than ten years before seemed almost useless to those who had labored to impress upon the community a realization of the beauty and value of art.

This great and unexpected gift came from a man of absolutely simple tastes, one who was content even to perform for himself the humble offices of his daily life, yet treasuring within his nature an appreciation of the beautiful which the opportunities of his life had never fully developed.

It was in large degree a feeling of what he ought to have had and enjoyed, not perhaps realizing what that something was, but determined that others, at least, should have and enjoy the opportunities which had been denied him, which led to his gift. Nothing in the bequest betokens the wish to glorify himself; further, it is a bequest unhampered by those conditions which so often defeat the purposes of the donor.

John Herron appears but once in his will to have directed that his belongings should have any place in the public eye, and here there is expressed the pathetic wish that certain family portraits and minor heir-looms should be disposed in the museum he was to found.

There was nothing stimulating in his immediate ancestry or in the circumstances of his early life which would justify the anticipation that he would find in art the motive for a great act of philanthropy. One would rather look for him to address his gift to utility or to charity, for his childhood and youth were spent in the performance of duties which rather chill than encourage the artistic-toil of an exhausting and monotonous form. It is true that persons of a certain temperament may find in contact with nature hidden beauties and a stimulus to the imagination that at last may crystallize into a very vivid perception of the artistic and the wish to spread abroad the gospel of beauty.

Mr. Herron seems to have been impressed with the fact that it was necessary for humanity to get away from the absorbing business of life, to

yield for a little while to the influences of nature and art; this is shown in the latter part of his life by his visits to the exhibitions of the Art Association, at which times he was doubtless impressed with the inadequacy and disadvantage under which the Association labored.

Certain truths find verification in the life of John Herron.

We should none of us be too ready to accept our own hurried estimate of mankind, his even carefully observed way of life. There may dwell within the heart purposes, ambitions, even a generous altruism which, through the strenuous life forced upon him, he may never reveal. In the present instance, peculiarities of character, necessities of business, diffidence of himself kept hidden through his long life a nature containing a wise and generous purpose.

John Herron must have foreseen that, aside from the pleasant and uplifting influences of art, the time has come in the trades and manufactures when to successfully compete with the products of the older nations, to whom art is as essential as material, our manufacturers must cultivate and display in their products no inconsiderable purely artistic discrimination. And indeed this very thought was in the mind of the subject of this address, as is seen from his insistence that a school of art should be established in connection with his bequest.

If we are to judge men by their private lives nothing is found in that of Mr. Herron, other than that which well becomes a man. If we may further judge them by their public spirit, we must accord to John Herron a high position among men; he has contributed in a wise and far-seeing manner to the education of our youth, to the uplifting of our people, to the greatness of our city. We have in Mr. Herron a man who found no joy in the gratification of small and selfish desires, but whose life, we must feel, was brightened and dignified by a fixed purpose, involving large and perennial good "to numbers yet unborn."

It is much to be first in such a public bequest; while it may be logically anticipated that in the fullness of time others will feel moved to generosity in the same cause, yet the fact should be recorded, that this benefaction came to the Art Association unsought at a time when it was peculiarly valuable, even literally essential to the furtherance of its work.

Truly Mr. Herron followed in the injunction that we should give in secret, for that which is given as he gave is surely given without thought of

self-glory. He had no desire to attract public attention to himself as a philanthropist. He was not one to pose in an unnatural or affected attitude or to attempt to elicit applause from the unthinking; rather was he genuine, simple and sincere in all things. Nowhere does it appear that over-self-appreciation influenced the generous bequest of Mr. Herron.

It would have been very easy for him during his lifetime to have anticipated, as it were, to have discounted the effect of his bequest by a forecast of his purpose; but no sign escaped him.

We are struck, too, by the clear-sighted and practical wisdom which characterizes the manner of his gift. No one in his position lacks abundant suggestion from more or less deserving characters as to their claims to recognition at his hands. Indeed, the rich man, with few or no direct heirs of his blood, seldom lacks would-be beneficiaries. So it was with John Herron, but instead of giving to many institutions a pittance, it was his decision that one deserving public need should be met and that in a way to afford it abundant resources, means for the development of its fullest power for good to the community. To give effect to his gift as a means of general and widespread usefulness he thought that it should be centered---not diffused.

As a summary we may say that John Herron was a plain, unassuming man, kind to all with whom he came in contact, charitable to the needy and unfortunate, industrious and thrifty, strictly honest and just in all his dealings; a man who paid as he went, who wanted what was his due, a thoroughly truthful man with a sunny nature and a keen sense of humor.

He hath done what he could; it remains for others to carry on the work.

He died April 30, 1895, at the age of seventy-eight years, and his fellow citizens of Indianapolis and of the state should cherish his memory as that of a worthy man who did his duty to humanity as it was given him to see it.

Such a man was John Herron, whose life was one of usefulness, exemplary, moral, single-minded, whose beneficence we gather to-day to see embodied in immortal stone.



FIRST HOME OF THE JOHN HERRON ART INSTITUTE (1901-1905)
Known as the Tinker House, Talbott Place, demolished to make
room for the new building dedicated November 20, 1906

THE INDIANAPOLIS JOURNAL.

INDIANAPOLIS, SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 18, 1895.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

JOHN HERRON'S LIFE.

A Native of England—His Accumulations in Indianapolis.

John Herron was the son of George and Nancy Herron and was born at Carlton, near Skipton, in Craven, Eng., March 29, 1817. The following September his parents came to America, landing at Philadelphia, after a six weeks' voyage in a sailing vessel. His parents first located in Penn. Chester county, Pennsylvania, where his father was business manager of a cotton mill for eight years. After that his parents moved to a farm near Oxford, Pa., and remained there till 1839, when they moved West. Stopping in Cincinnati awhile to study the surrounding country, his father finally settled on a farm in Franklin county, near Mount Carmel. Here Mr. Herron lived for many years, remaining single until he was fifty-two years of age. Dec. 23, 1869, he was married to Miss Electa D. Turrell. There were no children as a result of the union. He and his wife still remained on the Franklin county farm. Shortly after his marriage he began investing money in Indianapolis real estate and Nov. 3, 1881, he moved to this city, having in the meantime invested most of his money here. He first lived at No. 781 North Illinois street, but a short time after coming to this city he moved to the home which he recently occupied at No. 339 College avenue. When he came to this city he brought with him his sister Ann,

who was demented. She was later placed in a sanitarium when she became too violent for him to care for her. At one time, while in a fit of frenzy, she attempted to kill herself and when Mr. Herron attempted to prevent it she turned on him and would probably have killed him if assistance had not arrived. She afterwards killed herself at the sanitarium. This was in October, 1891, and in October, 1892, Mrs. Herron died, leaving Mr. Herron without near relatives, all the members of his father's family having died some years before.

Those who knew Mr. Herron were much surprised when it was first rumored that he had left a large portion of his property to the city or to charity—it was not known then who the beneficiaries would be. He was not looked upon as a man who would work all his life to accumulate property and then dispose of it in that way. While not exactly a stingy man or miserly, he had his peculiar ways which would not indicate such a disposal of his property. He owned a large number of pieces of small property in the northeastern part of the city, and it is said of him that he was his own carpenter and repairer. He was prompt and correct in everything he did. When a tenant would complain that property was in need of repairs, he would not allow twenty-four hours to pass without investigating the report and if he thought it necessary the next day he would take his tool box and with a little lumber in a spring wagon go to the house and do the necessary work himself.

His business methods were precise and always correct. His tenants say that if the rent amounted to a monthly sum which did not divide in even cents he would collect the overplus one month and the next month would deduct it, thus evening the amount. His neighbors speak well of him and say he was friendly and sociable, but was not given to expenditures for the fancy things of life, believing in living frugally and unostentatiously.

He was the constant guardian of his unfortunate sister and until she became so violent that it was necessary to confine her, she lived with him. Since the death of his sister and that of his wife, a year later, he has been in feeble health and several times it was thought that his illness would prove fatal. Last Thanksgiving day, accompanied by his wife's niece, Miss Anna Turrell, he went to California, hoping to regain his health, and it was while there that he was burned so badly that death resulted.

Willard S. Turrell, brother of Miss Anna Turrell, was seen at the Herron home last night and declined to say anything regarding the will. To all questions he simply referred the reporter to attorney Stanton, who, he said, would answer all questions. Miss Turrell could not be seen.

The following is from ‘A HISTORY OF THE JOHN HERRON ART INSTITUTE’ by Sister M. Dolorita Carper (1947).

On April 30, 1895, the Indianapolis Journal recorded the notice of the death of seventy-eight year old John Herron, a citizen of Indianapolis, who was fatally burned in a lodging house fire at Los Angeles, California, whither he had gone in search of health.

The details of the tragedy were related to Ambrose P. Stanton, Mr. Herron's lawyer, when he and Miss Anna Turrell, a niece of the benefactor, returned to Indianapolis with the corpse. According to Mr. Stanton's account, Miss Turrell played the role of a heroine in trying to save her uncle's life. She had gone with Mr. Herron to Los Angeles on the preceding Thanksgiving day in order to care for him, for he was very feeble and partially blind.

A bed bug was the primary cause of the fire. The insect was found in the boarding house where Mr. Herron and Miss Turrell were stopping. The landlady was notified and she began a liberal use of coal oil. The latter was poured about the casement of the rooms and on the furniture. In the grate of Mr. Herron's room a few embers were burning.

Mr. Herron and Miss Turrell were sitting in the room in the evening when it was noticed that there was a small fire burning just outside the grate. It had probably resulted from a spark flying out and coming in contact with some of the oil. Miss Turrell arose to stamp out the fire and the next moment the room was filled with flames. It seemed as if the fumes from the oil had ignited. Miss Turrell seized Mr. Herron by the hand and led him to the window. Exit by the door was impossible because of the flames. While she was forcing open a shutter, Mr. Herron pulled away and started across the room for the door, but fell near a table in the center. Miss Turrell jumped from the window and ran around to the hall from which the door to the burning room entered. She could see her uncle lying on the floor with the flames and smoke all around him. She asked some men who had run in, to go in and get him out, but they replied that it was impossible. Miss Turrell ran in despite their warnings and, grabbing her uncle by the arm, with wonderful strength pulled his seemingly lifeless body to a place of safety. In so doing her face and arms were burned and she lost a great deal of her hair. After she

had seen her uncle placed in a neighbor's house with medical attendance she realized for the first time that she was injured.

Mr. Herron succumbed to the fatal burns and after two weeks the funeral services were held at the Herron house, 330 College Avenue. The next day Mr. Herron's body was interred in the ancestral graveyard at Mount Carmel, Indiana.

Quietly and unobtrusively Mr. Herron had lived and there were few to mourn his passing. It was only after his death that the life story of this comparatively unknown and retiring citizen was revealed to the public.

John Herron was born at Carlton, near Skipton, in Craven, England, March 29, 1817, the son of George and Nancy Herron. At this time the business depression which followed the Napoleonic wars had set in, and his parents moved to America, settling in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Here, although the father had been trained as a tanner with an apprenticeship of seven years, he became an employee and later, business manager of a cotton mill where he worked for about eight years. He earned six dollars a week with which he managed to support his family. In the latter period this amount was increased to eight dollars.

After that his parents moved to a farm in Oxford, Pennsylvania, and again in 1837 to Cincinnati. Two years later, they finally settled on a one hundred sixty-acre farm in Franklin County, near Mount Carmel, Indiana. On that farm, which now belongs to the Art Association of Indianapolis, there stands a well-built, handsome brick house and a barn, the plan of which was designed by John Herron's father and took a first prize at the Ohio State Fair one year for being the best plan for such a purpose. A tile works on the farm also added somewhat to the family bank account. Mr. Herron lived here for many years, remaining single until he was fifty-two years of age. After his marriage, December 23, 1869, to Electa D. Turrell, he continued to remain on the Franklin County Farm.

About this time, he began investing most of his money in Indianapolis real estate, and on November 3, 1881, he made his permanent home here. For a short time he lived at 781 North Illinois Street, but soon moved to 330 College Avenue where he resided until his death.

Mr. Herron's marriage was childless, and his parents and all of the children except a sister, Ann, had died in the Franklin County home. Ann,

who was demented, was lovingly cared for by her brother until she became too violent and had to be placed in a sanitarium where she died in October 1891. On October of the next year, Mr. Herron's wife died, leaving him without near relatives other than second and third cousins residing in Franklin County, and Miss Anna Turrell and her brother, Williard S. Turrell, niece and nephew through marriage.

After the death of his family, Mr. Herron accumulated considerable wealth, having no care but the investment of his funds. He engaged in the real estate business in this city and invested a large part of his money in property on College Avenue.

The acquisition of wealth did not change his frugal manner of living. He always did his own carpentry work. Whenever a tenant complained of needed repairs on his property, Mr. Herron would immediately investigate the matter and if he deemed it necessary, the job would be taken care of personally within the next twenty-four hours.

Mr. Herron's business methods were precise and always correct. It is said that he never gave a note, but always paid cash. He owed no man a cent and he expected to collect all that was due him. All the rents were collected by himself and noted down in a most methodical manner. If the amount of the monthly rental did not divide in even cents he would equalize the sum by collecting the surplus of one month and deducting it the next month. His tenants had his whole-hearted approval, and his neighbors spoke of him as being friendly and sociable.

Although Mr. Herron himself did not attend any church, Mr. Stanton related that "he bought a lot for the Universalist Church, paying two thousand dollars for it, his wife being a member." It was in the Central Universalist Church, situated on the corner of North New Jersey and Sixth Streets, at 10:30 A.M., May 26, 1895, that memorial services for Mr. Herron were held, participated in by Reverend R. E. John, of London, Ohio, Reverend B. F. Foster, Mrs. May Wright Sewall, and A. P. Stanton.

The following Monday morning after the funeral, Mr. Stanton called at the Girl's Classical School, 824 North Pennsylvania Street, and asked to speak to Mrs. May Wright Sewall, Principal of the school.

She felt that there must be something of importance or he would not interrupt her there. His first words were: "You are the president of the Art

Association, I believe.” She assured him that she was, and intuitively she read his message, for she said: “And you have come to bring a fortune.” Mr. Stanton was astonished and asked her what she knew, but she knew nothing; she only felt it. He then told her of the will (of John Herron).

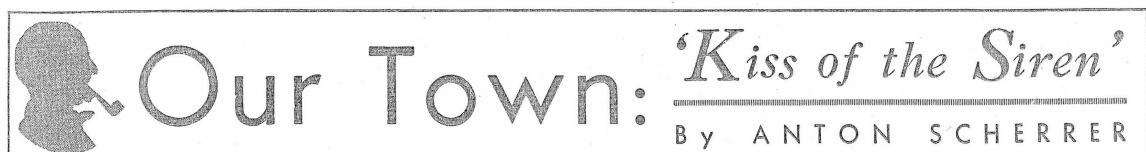
The next day, May 18, three columns on the first page of the Indianapolis Journal were devoted to the public announcement of Mr. Herron’s will. Dying childless and without near relatives, Mr. Herron left the bulk of his estate to the Art Association of Indianapolis with the stipulation that his name be perpetuated in an art gallery and an art school to be established by the Association. Mr. Stanton estimated the value of the Herron estate to be \$225,000. Most of the estate was invested in realty amounting to about \$100,000, represented in business houses and residence property. The executor held about \$90,000 worth of real estate mortgages bearing six and seven per cent; and there were cash deposits in the city banks amounting to \$13,000.

The Indianapolis Times

SECOND SECTION

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1943

PAGE 9



ON APRIL 30, 1895, Los Angeles papers recorded the death of John Herron, a 78-year-old citizen of Indianapolis who had gone to California in search of health.

It was a grim piece of reporting. Mr. Herron, it appears, was a victim of spring housecleaning. A can of coal oil used in the process caught fire and enveloped the helpless man in flames. Miss Anna Turrell, a remote relative (his wife's niece) and a woman as courageous as they come, tried her best to save him but to no avail.

Two weeks later, Miss Turrell and Ambrose P. Stanton brought Mr. Herron home. Mr. Stanton, an Indianapolis attorney, had hurried west when a telegram told him of the accident. A little group of mourners attended services at the Herron home, 330 College ave. (between Irwin st. and Lincoln ave., which now carry the streamlined names of 14th and 15th sts.). Next day Mr. Herron's body was laid beside that of his wife in the ancestral graveyard in Mt. Carmel, Franklin county. All of which latter news was tucked away on the inside pages of Indianapolis papers.

Three days after the funeral, Mr. Herron's name reappeared in print, this time on the front page. On that day the records of the Marion county probate court revealed that Mr. Herron had bequeathed the bulk of his estate to the Art association of Indianapolis. It amounted to more than a quarter of a million dollars.

The Tongues Wagged

IMMEDIATELY TONGUES began to wag in an effort to identify Mr. Herron. Nobody connected with the Art association had ever heard of him, let alone ever having seen him. And by the same token, mighty few people in Indianapolis had ever heard of the Art association -- certainly nobody moving in Mr. Herron's set.

Next morning, bright and early, the directors of the Art association met in the chaste parlors of the Girls' Classical school, the cultural center of Indianapolis. It was a stylish institution run by Mrs. May Wright Sewall who, at that time, was also president of the obscure Art association. At this meeting the directors formally accepted the bequest with all conditions attached. Before adjourning, Charles E. Coffin rose and "Resolved, that our worthy president is a living refutation of the slander that a woman cannot keep a secret." It then came out that Mrs. Sewall knew of the bequest the night before the will appeared in the papers. It surprised only those who lived in sheltered lives. Mrs. Sewall was always the first to know anything new in Indianapolis.

The Past Comes Out

IN THE COURSE of the following Mrs. Sewall was seized with an inspiration and rented the Grand Opera house for a mass meeting to celebrate the windfall. It lacked only fireworks to make it the greatest celebration ever held in Indianapolis. On that occasion, Mr. Stanton delivered the longest and, certainly, the most entertaining speech. By this time it was common knowledge that Attorney Stanton had been named executor of the will, in an appointment pursuant to Mr. Herron's wish.

Mr. Stanton cleared up everything concerning Mr. Herron's past. John Herron, he said, was born in England of a father much like himself -- frugal and hard-working with a lot of horse-sense and business ability. He was only six months old when the family came to America. In 1817, the period of the depression following the Napoleonic wars. They had little money.

The family settled in Oxford, Chester county, Pennsylvania where the father, a tanner by trade, found work in a cotton factory at \$8.00 a week. It was enough to feed the whole family. Eventually, the father ran the whole factory. The increased pay of a general manager didn't turn his head nor change his style of living. Everything over \$8.00 a week was salted away and represented savings.

An Artistic Barn

THIRTY YEARS later, the family moved to Cincinnati and bought a farm of 160 acres across the Ohio line in Franklin county near Mt. Carmel. On that farm they built a work of art in the shape of a barn which took the first prize at the Ohio state Fair one year for being the best plan for such a purpose. "That farm including its artistic barn," said Mr. Stanton, "is now one of the properties of the Indianapolis Art association."

In 1883 when he was 66 years old, John Herron settled in Indianapolis. He brought his wife and his sister with him. The Herrons had no children. Stranger still was the biological fact that all of his four brothers and sisters died childless. All of which is a roundabout way of saying that eventually Mr. Herron inherited not only a good part of the money accumulated by his father but, more or less, that of his brothers and sisters too. Added to what he had earned himself, it represented a tidy sum.

Established in Indianapolis, Mr. Herron invested his savings in properties located in the northeast part of the town. He collected the rents himself and noted down every cent received in a little black book just as his father before him had done. If anybody owed him a nickel he expected to get it and if he owed anybody a penny he would walk a mile to liquidate the debt. When he rented a property, say for \$800 a year (\$66.66 & two-thirds a month), he asked for the two-thirds cents - one month \$66.66, the next \$66.67. Twice a year, on June 1 and again on Dec. 1, he demanded \$66.88 to make it come out absolutely right.

It's o. k., I checked it.

Made Own Repairs

MOREOVER, IF any of his properties needed repairs, Mr. Herron would handle the job himself. He would arrive in a spring wagon with his tool chest, don his overalls, and go to work at once. What's more: he came almost immediately when anybody registered a kick. It wasn't mentioned at his funeral but Landlord Herron had the unqualified approval of his tenants.

One day in 1892 it was after the loss of his wife and his sister -- Mr. Herron called on Mr. Stanton and showed him a handful of family heirlooms,

including the first penny he had ever earned. Now that it was pretty certain that the family was headed for extinction, Mr. Herron was 'wondering' what was going to become of his treasures. There was his fortune too, he said, and gradually a fixed purpose was formed to leave the estate to some institution and have it preserve his first earned penny.

Chances are that then and there Mr. Stanton put him wise to the Art association. Up until then, Mr. Herron had never thought of making a will. He was 75 years old when he got around to it. His first earned penny is in the cornerstone of the structure built with his money. I had a hunch you'd ask about it.

Editorial Flurry

THE NEWS OF Mr. Herron's generosity moved an Indianapolis editor to make two imperative re-quests. First of all, he demanded that Mr. and Mrs. Herron's bodies be dug up and transferred to Crown Hill, the sooner the better. His other demand was even more alarming. With a gleam in his eye, the editor wrote: "This bequest is a call for the exercise of conservation, of wisdom, of foresight, in short of those prudential qualities which men called longheaded exemplify - qualities which are the fruit of an instinct developed by long years of experience. There is time enough for all this indeed, but when the time comes, when the will is proved, the property made over, and its disposition the question of the hour, then there must be sagacious men in command."

The transparent editorial meant only one thing, namely to oust the women and let the men take over now that there was some money to spend. It caught a bear by the tail. At any rate, the reaction was immediate. With the fury of Xanthippe, the women pronounced the point of view the most impertinent display of masculinity ever seen in Indianapolis. For a while it looked as if Indianapolis husbands had all they could do to hold their art-conscious wives in check.

The editorial served one good purpose, however. It brought into the open what the women of Indianapolis had done to merit Mr. Herron's confidence. It turned out, for example, that as early as 1881 Mrs. May, Wright Sewall brought Mrs. Nancy Adsit of Milwaukee to Indianapolis to

give a series of illustrated lectures on ceramics, of all things. The next winter Mrs. Sewall repeated the performance and this time Mrs. Adsit brought her portfolio of etchings along.

60 Years Ago Today

ON THE OCCASION of the last lecture, Mrs. Sewall asked everybody to stick around and discuss the organization of a society for the promotion and study of art. Eighteen women, with not a man in sight, signed the Articles of Association on Oct. 11, 1883, which, come to think of it, was exactly 60 years ago today. A competent reporter would have managed to get an item as big as that into his first sentence.

From that day in 1883 to 1895, the year of the windfall, the women of the Art association did their best to satisfy a local hunger for beauty. The exhibitions--at least one a year--were first held in English's hotel and later in the original Plymouth church, the masonic hall, the original Columbia club, the Denison hotel, and finally in the original Propylaeum, another feminine enterprise thought up by Mrs. Sewall. To the few who knew about it, the Art association, even as far back as then, had every appearance of stability.

Indeed, the stability of the Art association is shown by nothing else in its career more clearly than by the patience with which the women struggled to get hold of Mr. Herron's money. There were, for example, nearly two and a half years of litigation over the will. Mr. Herron left no lineal descendants closer than a third cousin, but strangely enough (or maybe not at all) people purporting to be his relatives poured in from everywhere.

Even the legislature got mixed up in the controversy. A bill bearing a most innocent title would have deprived the Art association of its bequest. The only reason it didn't was because Mrs. Sewall talked Governor Mount into vetoing the bill in the event of its passage. On the day the bill was up for third reading, Mrs. Sewall sat in the statehouse and silently laughed up her sleeve. We shall never see her like again.

A Lovely Property

AFTER THE WILL cleared the court, the matter of a site for the proposed museum came up. Some men wanted their wives to buy the beer garden known as Fairbanks where St. Vincent's Hospital now stands. Others plugged for the Talbott property at Pennsylvania and 16th sts. The reason the latter site won out was because the two property holders to the north graciously handed over their homes. Except for that gift there wouldn't have been room for a school back of the museum. By the time all this was settled it was 1901, six years after the reading of the will. The Talbott place--or old Tinker house as it was often called-- was one of the loveliest properties in Indianapolis. The house, set in a grove of some of the biggest trees around here, had a two-story porch treated with cast-iron railings and supports, and over this sprawled the most gorgeous vine in town. It was hops and not wisteria or clematis as some old-timers would have you believe. When in bloom the whole thing looked like something brought from New Orleans.

When the Art association acquired the property, it was the home of Theodore C. Steele's family. As a matter of fact, it was here in a little studio to the north of the house that Mr. Steele finished some of his best pictures. The studio, designed and built by Mr. Steele shortly after his student days in Munich, was the first of its kind in Indianapolis.

Opened in 1902

ALMOST LOST in antiquity is the fact that the John Herron Art institute opened up for business in the Talbott-Tinker-Steele house--not in the present building as many believe. Miss Turrell was the first curator. She wasn't mixed up in the litigation, if I remember correctly.

The date of the opening was the night of March 4, 1902. It was a brilliant affair. The ladies came corseted within an inch, of their lives and the men appeared in swallow-tail coats most of which were mighty tight, too. Surrounded as they were that night, by walls hung with pictures by Francois Augusto Bonheur (Rosa's brother) and Josef Israels and Fritz Thaulow and Walter Shirlaw, it was a sight the like of which Indianapolis had never seen. On the landing of the staircase that night hung "The Kiss of the Siren,"

probably the most controversial picture ever shown in Indianapolis. It represents a stark naked woman floating about in the water with nothing more on her mind, apparently, than a determination to pick up a sailor and plant a kiss on his salty lips.

Immediately two, factions formed: (1) The highbrows who didn't know what they liked but knew an awful lot about art; and (2) the lowbrows who didn't know a thing about art (and said so) but knew what they liked (you bet). Of the two, the lowbrows were the most fun. They said "The Kiss of the Siren" was nothing but an example of "saloon art" (and not a very good saloon at that), and even went so far as to intimate that the floating woman was only 99 44/100 percent pure.

Dangers of the Deep

THOROUGHLY AROUSED by what they called a plebian point of view, the highbrows struck back and questioned the lowbrow's ability to sense the picture's noble message. The message, they said, was the moral of the Lorelei and symbolized the fascination and dangers of the deep; more specifically, the plight of men who get in so deep that they can't get out. Whereupon the lowbrows, in all innocence, wanted to know why in hell artists always picked naked women to deliver their messages.

The controversy might be raging yet except for the fact that several years ago the Art association loaned "The Kiss of the Siren" to a hotel in Wawasee for an indefinite period. In its present (and privisional) location the picture attracts little or no attention--so used are the lake dwellers up there to seeing real-for-sure women with their clothes off.

Today the Henon Art institute is under the leadership of Mrs. James W. Fesler. The women--God bless 'em--are still in control. The fact is that nothing has happened to call for a revision of Meredith Nicholson's memorable essay, the one that appeared in the Atlantic in 1904 entitled "Indianapolis, a City of Homes." In the course of that article the gallant Mr. Nicholson remarked: "The women of Indianapolis have aided greatly in fashioning the city into an enlightened community They have been the mainstay of the Indianapolis Art association,"

As for the editor who perpetrated the libel back in 1895, he never again mentioned the women of the Art association. Instead, he took to writing editorials denouncing woman's suffrage.

Kiss of the Siren by Gustav Wetheimer (Indianapolis Museum of Art)





Anton Scherrer (1878-1960), who wrote this newspaper column on the people and history of Indianapolis was the son of Swiss born architect, Adolph Scherrer, the architect of the present Indiana State House. Anton Scherrer, along with his brother, Herman, followed their father in architectural endeavors under the firm of Adolph Scherrer and Sons.



From The Herron Chronicle, 2003

John Herron was born in Carlton, England in 1817. When he was six months old, his parents brought him to Pennsylvania and then to Cincinnati. John's father had numerous professions, including factory worker, manager of a cotton mill, and tile works owner. In 1839 the Herron family moved to a 160-acre farm near Mount Carmel in Franklin County, Indiana. John Herron married Electa D. Turrell in 1869 when he was 52 and the owner of the Franklin County farm. Herron invested the couple's savings in rental property in the northeast part of Indianapolis around College Avenue where he and his wife moved in the 1880s. Herron bought housing, renovated each building himself, collected his own rents, and made his own repairs. By the 1890s the value of his properties approached a quarter million dollars. Other than purchasing a lot for \$2,000 that he gave to the Universalist Church his wife attended, Herron did not indulge in philanthropy and was not involved in

local activities. Except for a sister who was in a sanitarium, he had no close relatives, and his marriage was childless. After his wife and his sister died in 1891, Herron must have felt the time had come to make a will to settle his estate.

In 1895, Herron a 78 year-old-man from Indianapolis, was seriously injured in a boarding house fire in Los Angeles. He had come to California in the hope of regaining his health. Herron's niece, Anna Turrell, had accompanied her partially blind uncle. Despite her efforts to save him, Herron died of his burns two weeks later on May 2, 1895. Anna Turrell survived her injuries and would play an important role in what would result from her uncle's legacy to the Art Association.

On Monday morning, May 13, 1895, Mary Wright Sewall received a visit from lawyer Ambrose P. Stanton, the executor of Herron's estate as well as his legal advisor for many years. Sewall said, "You have come to bring a fortune." Surprised at her comment, Stanton asked her how she knew. Sewall said she sensed his mission. Stanton proceeded to tell her that the Art Association of Indianapolis was the principle beneficiary of John Herron's estate in the amount of \$200,000. Although Stanton did not directly influence Herron's decision to leave his fortune to the Art Association, the association was indebted to him for vigilance in carrying out his client's wishes. Shortly after the announcement of the bequest, Stanton was elected a member of the board of directors of the Art Association. He became the association's treasurer from 1898 to 1912 and also served on its finance committee.

By all appearances, Herron had no connection to the arts and no connection to the Art Association, yet he left almost all his money to that organization. Stanton explained Herron's reasons to the 400 people who attended a celebratory meeting at the Grand Opera House on May 25, which was organized to express public recognition of John Herron's generous bequest:

[Herron] observed that nearly every interest in the city was getting along pretty well except its art culture. He decided to leave all his money to this purpose, except for a few small bequests. I ventured to suggest to him one day that he would do well to give more to the kindergarten, that being the institution that interested me most, but

he said that he could not give to all and would not have enough to give the Art Association. He had a broad idea of his mission. He wanted to put it to good and wanted it to benefit Indianapolis.

The only stipulation Herron made was that his name be attached to a gallery and art school. Many of the most influential and prominent residents of Indianapolis were invited to sit on the platform, and the governor and mayor gave speeches of congratulations.

The first thing on the agenda for the Art Association was to meet and decide what action to take regarding the use of the bequest. It was unanimously decided that the legacy should "serve as a nucleus, and whatever is done in the way of establishing a museum or institute should be done well." A committee was appointed to investigate and report to the board how best to proceed, but no immediate decisions could be made while Herron's remote relatives contested the will in which they had not been mentioned, with the exception of Anna Turrell who received \$10,000. At issue was more than \$25,000 worth of property that had not yet been converted to cash and that threw into question the validity of the will. The court reached a provisional settlement in October 1897 upholding Herron's \$200,000 gift to the association. Litigation would continue for the next 20 years.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JOHN HERRON (OCTOBER 21, 1892)

I, John Herron, of Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana do make and publish this my last Will and Testament.

Item First—I give and bequeath to Elizabeth West, wife of William West, to James Harrison, to John Harrison, and to Margaret Harrison, daughter of Elizabeth West, the sum of five hundred dollars each. Each of the foregoing bequests is upon the conditions, however, that, if any of the above named legatees shall take any step to contest the validity of this will or any provision thereof, the bequest as to such person shall be void; and that each of said legatees, on receipting to the executor for his, or her, legacy, shall waive all right to question or in any manner contest this will, and every provision thereof.

Item Second—I devise to Anna E. Turrell, now residing with me, in full the following described real estate situated in Marion County, Indiana to-wit: Lot numbered eight (8) in square fifteen (15) in Stoughton A. Fletchers North East Addition to the City of Indianapolis. The said Anna E. Turrell, also holds a certificate signed by me, dated July 4th, 1889, to the effect that she is entitled to one half the principle and interest of a certain mortgage loan made by me June 19th, 1889, to John George Wurgler. I direct that she be paid according to the terms of said certificate—I also give and bequeath to her the farther sum of five hundred dollars.

Item Third—I do give and bequeath to the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Association, to the Indianapolis Orphan Assylum [sic], of which Mrs. John A. Bradshaw is at this date president, and to the Association incorporated as the Indianapolis Home for Aged Women, but now known as the Katharine Home, the sum of One Thousand dollars each.

Item Fourth—Of the money now on deposit in my name in the Indiana National Bank of Indianapolis, Ind. there is one thousand dollars which was the property of my wife Electa D. Herron—there is at this date the farther sum of One thousand dollars which was also her property, in the safety vault in

Fletchers Bank Building in said city. Should I not account for these sums before my decease, I direct my Executor to do so to the estate of the said Electa D. Herron.

Item Fifth—For the payment of the foregoing bequests and legacies, debts and expenses of administration, and the residuary bequest in the items next following, I direct that my executor, by collections and sales, shall reduce to money my entire estate real and personal, wherever situated and for such purpose, I do direct and empower my executor, to sell all said

personal estate at public or private vendue at such times and upon such terms and in such manner as to him shall seem meet, without notice or appraiser and for like purpose I do direct, authorize and empower my said executor, to grant bargain sell and convey all of my real estate, wherever situated, in such parcels or tracts for such price or prices, upon such terms of cash or credit, and upon such securities, to such person and persons, at such times and within such period as he may deem to the best interests of my estate, said sales; however, not to be either unreasonably hurried or delayed. Said sales, or any of them, may be without order of court, at public or private, vendue, and when at private vendue without notice and when at public vendue upon such notice as my executor may determine—my executor shall have power to make all necessary and proper conveyances, and deeds executed by him shall convey title as fully as though made by me in my life time.

Item Sixth—After the payment of the special legacies, debts and expenses of administration as provided in the previous items, I do give and bequeath, all the residue and remainder of my estate, as the same shall be reduced to money, to the “Art Association of Indianapolis, Ind.,” a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana, on or about April 5th, 1892, to be to said corporation absolutely and forever. Provided, however and this bequest is upon the condition following:

That the Art Gallery and the Art School of said Association, when established and maintained, (next page)

shall each be designated and named by such name or names as will include the name of the testator as is part thereof, and the use of such name or names

shall be perpetual or so long as said Gallery and School are severally maintained. The Association may, however, if it prefer, adopt one name to include both Gallery and School.

My executor may pay to said association under this bequest the money realized by him from time to time, whenever he has received what is deemed by him proper evidence, that said association has adopted the name or names for the Gallery or School as herein set forth.

If said association shall not see fit to comply with the foregoing condition, or if, for any cause or reason, this bequest should fail to be or become invalid, then in either event, I direct that my executor shall distribute the residue and remainder of my estate in this item sought to be bequeathed, to such religious and charitable societies, churches organizations and corporations, located in the City of Indianapolis, Indiana, as he may select and in such portions as he may determine, including or not, as he deems meet, those named in item third of this will.

If said Art Association of Indianapolis, Ind. shall accept the bequest herein made, I request that it collect and appropriately preserve in said Art Gallery or School my family portraits, pictures, china and other heir-loom **Item**

Seventh—I do hereby revoke all former wills and codicils by me at any time made, and I do nominate and appoint Ambrose P. Stanton, of Indianapolis, Ind. The executor of this my last will and testament.

Witness my hand and seal this 12th day of October 1892. John Herron (seal)

Signed acknowledged and declared by John Herron as his last will and testament in our presence and signed by us as witnesses in his presence and in the presence of each other this 21st day of October 1892.

Said will being first read to the said John Herron in our presence.

J.H. Woodbur
John E. Scott

Last Will and Testament of John Herron

I, John Herron, of Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana, do make and publish this my last Will and Testament -
I am First: - I give and bequeath to Elizabeth Hest, wife of William Hest, to James Harrison, to John Harrison, and to Margaret Harrison, daughter of Elizabeth Hest, the sum of five hundred dollars each. Each of the foregoing bequests is upon the conditions, however, that if any of the above named legatees shall take any step to contest the validity of this will, or any provision thereof, the bequest as to such person shall be void; and that each of said legatees, on receipting to the executor for his, or her, legacy, shall waive all right to question or in any manner contest the validity of this will, and every provision thereof.

I am Second: I devise to Anna E. Purrell, now residing with me, in fee the following described real estate situated in Marion County, Indiana, to-wit: Lot numbered eight (8) and square fifteen (15), in Straighten & Ditcher North East Addition to the City of Indianapolis. The said Anna E. Purrell, also holds a certificate signed by me, dated July 4th. 1889, to the effect that she is entitled to one half the principal and interest of a certain mortgage loan made by me, June 9th. 1889, to John George Wargler. I direct that she be paid according to the terms of said certificate - I also give and bequeath to her the further sum of five hundred dollars.

I am Third: - I do give and bequeath to the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Association, to the Indianapolis Woman's Asylum of which Mrs. John B. Bradshaw is at this date President, and to the Association incorporated as the Indianapolis Home for Aged Women, but now known as the "Katharine Home", the sum of One Thousand dollars each.

I am Fourth: Of the money now on deposit in my name in the Indiana National Bank of Indianapolis, Ind. there is one thousand dollars which was the property of my wife Electa D. Herron - there is at this date the further sum of One thousand dollars, which was also her property in the Safety Vault in Fletcher Bank Building in said city - I should I not account for these sums before my decease, I direct my Executor to do so to the estate of the said Electa D. Herron.

I am Fifth: For the payment of the foregoing bequests and legacies, debts and expenses of administration, and the residuary hereof in the items next following, I direct that my executor, by collections and sales, shall reduce my money, my entire estate, real and personal,

personal estate at public or private vendue, at such times and upon such terms and in such manner as to him shall seem meet, without notice or appraisement, and for like purpose, I do direct, authorize and empower my said executor, to grant bargain sell and convey all my real estate, wherever situated, in such parcels or tracts for such price or prices, upon such terms of cash, credit, and upon such securities, to such person and persons, at such times and within such period, as he may deem to the best interests of my estate, said sales, however, not to be either unreasonably hurried or delayed. Said sales, or any of them, may be without order of court, at public or private vendue, and when at private vendue without notice, and when at public vendue upon such notice as my executor may determine. My executor shall have power to make all necessary and proper conveyances, and deeds executed by him shall convey title as fully as though made by me in my life time.

Item Fifth. After the payment of the special legacies, debts and expenses of administration as provided in the previous items, I do give and bequeath, all the residue and remainder of my estate, as the same shall be reduced to money, to the Art Association of Indianapolis, Ind., a corporation incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana; on or about April 5th 1925, to be to said corporation absolutely and forever,

Provided, however, and this bequest is upon the condition following: That the Art Gallery and the Art School of said Association, when established and maintained,

AFFIDAVIT OF DEATH. (next page.)

State of Indiana, Marion County, Set:

being duly sworn, we each say that
deceased this life on or about the _____ day of _____, 19____, and at the time of _____ death was a resident of said County and State.
Subscribed and sworn to before me, this _____ day of _____, A. D. 19____. Clerk

PROOF OF WILL.

Before the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the County of Marion, in the State of Indiana, personally came _____
subscribing witnesses in the foregoing instrument of writing, who being by me first duly sworn, upon oath depose
and say that the _____ testat named in the instrument of writing purporting to be _____ LAST WILL
AND TESTAMENT, did sign, seal, publish and declare the same to be _____ last will and testament, on the day of the date thereof; that the said testat was at the same time
of the full age of twenty-one years, and of sound and disposing mind and memory, not blind, he was under no coercion, compulsion or restraint, and that he was competent to
do so. And that the said testat so signed, sealed, published and declared the same to be _____ last will and testament, in manner and form as aforesaid
in the presence of all of _____
the other subscribing witnesses thereto, and that each attested the same, and subscribed their names as witnesses thereto, in the presence and at the request of said testat, and in
the presence of each other.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, in witness whereof, I hereunto affix the seal of said Court, and subscribe my name as Indiana Clerk,
this _____ day of _____, A. D. 19____. Clerk

CERTIFICATE OF PROBATE.

State of Indiana, Marion County, ss:

I, _____ Clerk of the Circuit Court of the County of Marion, in the State of Indiana, do hereby certify that
the foregoing last will and testament of _____
has been duly admitted to probate before me.

That the same was proven by the examination, under oath, of _____
the subscribing witnesses thereto, and that a full and complete, correct and true copy of the said will, and of the proof and examination of the witnesses by whom the same was proven, has been
made and is now of record in the Will Record of said County.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed the seal of the said Court, and subscribed my name as Indiana Clerk,
this _____ day of _____, A. D. 19____.

shall each be designated and named by such name or names, as will include the name of the testator as a part thereof, and the use of such name or names shall be perpetual, or so long as said Gallery and School are severally maintained. The Association may, however, if it prefer, adopt one name to include both Gallery and School.

The executor may pay to said association under this bequest the money realized by him from time to time, whenever he has received what is deemed by him proper evidence, that said association has adopted the name or names for the Gallery or School as herein set forth.

~~If said Association shall not see fit to accept the money for any condition, or for any cause or reasons, this bequest should fail or become invalid, then in either event, I direct that my executor shall distribute the residue and remainder of my estate in this item sought to be bequeathed, to such religious and charitable societies, churches, organizations and corporations, located in the city of Indianapolis, Indiana, as he may select and in such portions as he may determine, including or not, as he deems meet, those named in item third of this will.~~

Said Art Association of Indianapolis, Ind., shall accept the bequest herein made, I request that it collect and appropriately preserve in said Art Gallery or School my family portraits, pictures, china and other heir looms.

Item Seventh: I do hereby revoke all former wills and codicils, by me at any time made, and I do hereby nominate and appoint Ambrose P. Stanton, of Indianapolis Ind., the executor of this my last will and testament.

Witness my hand and seal this 21st day of October, 1892.

John Kerron (seal)
Signed, acknowledged, and declared by John Kerron as his last will and testament and in my presence and signed by us as witnesses in his presence and in the presence of each other this 21st day of October, 1892.

Said will being first read to the said John Kerron in our presence,

J. H. Woodburn
John P. Scott.

AFFIDAVIT OF DEATH.

State of Indiana, Marion County, Set:

Ambrose P. Stanton, being duly sworn, on oath says that *John H. Kisson* departed this life on or about the 31 day of March, 1895 and at the time of his death was a resident of said County and State.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 17 day of May, A. D. 1895 *James W. Fisher*, Clerk.

PROOF OF WILL.

Before the Clerk of the Circuit Court of the County of Marion, in the State of Indiana, personally came *J. F. Woodburn* of the subscribing witnesses to the foregoing instrument of writing, who being by me first duly sworn, upon oath depose and say that the LAST WILL testate named in the instrument of writing purporting to be his LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, did sign, seal, publish and declare the same to be his last will and testament, on the day of the date thereof; that the said testator, at the same time of the full age of twenty-one years, and of sound and disposing mind and memory, and that he was under no coercion, compulsion or restraint, and that he was competent to devise his property. And that the said testator signed, sealed, published and declared the same to be his last will and testament, in manner and form as aforesaid in the presence of affiant and of *John C. Scott* the other subscribing witness thereto, and that each attested the same, and subscribed their names as witnesses thereto, and in the presence of each other.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, in witness whereof, I have hereunto affixed the seal of said Court, and subscribe my name as Indianapolis, this 17 day of May, A. D. 1895 *James W. Fisher*, Clerk.

CERTIFICATE OF PROBATE

State of Indiana, Marion County, ss: *James W. Fisher*, Clerk of the Circuit Court of the County of Marion, in the State of Indiana, do hereby certify that the foregoing last will and testament of *John H. Kisson* has been duly admitted to probate before said court. That the same was proven by the examination, under oath, of *J. F. Woodburn* and *John C. Scott* the subscribing witnesses thereto, and that a full and complete record of the said will, and of the proof and examination of the witnesses by whom the same was proven, has been made and is now of record in the Will Records of said County.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed the seal of the said Court, and subscribed my name as Clerk.

From the San Francisco Call, April 29, 1895

LOS ANGELES, CAL., April 29.—John Herron, formerly a resident and real estate dealer of Indianapolis, Ind., was perhaps fatally burned in the Weid lodging-house this morning. The house caught fire from gasoline which Miss Anna Terrill, his niece, was pouring out. The gasoline quickly generated fumes which reached a fire in the grate. An explosion resulted and set everything in the room on fire.

Miss Terrill was seriously burned about the hands and face while trying to remove her uncle, who is 70 years of age and an invalid. She was overcome by heat and fell exhausted. When the firemen reached the room Herron was found to be fearfully burned. He cannot live long.

The injured woman has a brother in Pasadena and a cousin, Seneca La Rue, in Riverside.

From the KoKomo Tribune, April 30, 1895

Former Indianian Fatally Burned.

LOS ANGELES, April 30.—John Herron, formerly an Indianapolis real estate dealer, was fatally burned in a lodging-house fire yesterday. His niece, who accidentally started the fire by handling gasoline, was also severely burned. Herron had been bedridden for months.

From the Indianapolis Journal, April 30, 1895 (p.8)

JOHN HERRON FATALLY BURNED.

**A Wealthy Resident of This City Dies
in California.**

John Herron, a wealthy citizen of Indianapolis, was fatally burned at Los Angeles, Cal., yesterday afternoon in a lodging house fire. Particulars as to the accident are meager. A dispatch from Los Angeles last night said the fire started from the explosion of gasoline in the hands of Mr. Herron's niece, Miss Annie Turrell. Miss Turrell was also severely burned. Mr. Herron lived at No. 330 College avenue with his nephew and niece, Miss Annie Turrell. Last November he went to Los Angeles in search of health. Miss Turrell accompanied him and the two were engaged in light housekeeping when the accident happened. Sherman Turrell, the nephew of Mr. Herron, said last night that the family had no particulars regarding the accident aside from brief telegraphic dispatches.

John Herron was a gentleman of considerable wealth, but was comparatively unknown in the city. He was of a retiring nature and associated very little with other men of the world. He was a widower, his wife having died two years ago, leaving no children. Since the death of his wife, Miss Annie Turrell, his neice, has been making her home with him, and accompanied him on his trip to California. Mr. Herron came to this city about twelve years ago from Franklin county. He engaged in the real estate business and has succeeded in accumulating considerable property. A large part of his money is invested in real estate in this city, a large number of houses on College avenue being his property. He has been a client of A. P. Stanton, of the law firm of Stanton & Denny, and Mr. Stanton has been his confidential adviser. Mr. Herron's health was delicate, and he has been of a despondent disposition, and at such times Mr. Stanton has been the only person who could influence him. Yesterday afternoon a telegram was received by Mr. Stanton from Miss Turrell stating that she and her uncle were badly burned, and that Mr. Herron would probably die, and asking Mr. Stanton to come immediately. He, however, thought that the seriousness of the affair had perhaps been exaggerated in the excitement, and delayed going until he could hear more definitely. Last night the word came that Mr. Herron was dead, and Mr. Stanton will probably start for Los Angeles this morning.

Indianapolis Journal 30 Apr 1895 p.8

From the Indianapolis Journal, May 27, 1895 (p.3)

AT MR. HERRON'S CHURCH.

Memorial Services Held in the Universalist Pulpit.

At the Universalist Church, corner of New Jersey and Sixth streets, yesterday morning services were held in memory of John Herron, who gave so liberally to the Art Association, who was a member of the church, and who aided largely in its establishment. Mrs. Herron, before her death, gave the lot upon which the church is built, and to Mr. Herron the congregation is largely indebted for the building. As Mr. Herron was a member of the congregation, it was thought proper that services should be held.

Rev. N. L. John, of London, O., preached the sermon of the morning and conducted the services. At the conclusion of his sermon he read a sketch of the life of Mr. Herron, telling how he had lived and labored. Rev. B. F. Foster, of this city, followed with a few remarks regarding the character of Mr. Herron. Mr. Foster was a friend of Mr. Herron's, and his remarks bore closely upon his life. Mrs. May Wright Sewall spoke regarding the bequest to the Art Association. Mrs. Sewall spoke of the

gifts of Mr. Herron, recalling his liberality to the church in which the services were held. She said the Universalist Church was democratic, and the bequest to the association was probably due to Mr. Herron's associations in the church. He had given for something which can be enjoyed and appreciated by the whole people. Mr. Ambrose Stanton also spoke of the character of Mr. Herron, having been his attorney and intimately related to him. He said Mr. Herron had been misjudged during his life, for people regarded him as a close man. He was close in his business transactions, but he gave liberally without letting people know that he was giving. The church was well filled with an interested audience during the services. The music given was exceptionally good.

THE INDIANAPOLIS JOURNAL
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26. 1895.

TO ATTACK THE WILL

**ATTEMPT TO SET ASIDE JOHN HER-
RON'S MUNIFICENT GIFT.**

**Suit Will Be Filled at Brookville, in
a Few Days, by Congressman
Watson and Others**

SKELETONS TO COME OUT

**ALLEGATIONS MADE BY THE DE-
CEDENT'S DISTANT RELATIVES.**

**Miss Terrell's Alleged Influence-Art
Association Expecting a Suit
of This Nature.**

A suit is in preparation, which will be filed at Brookville, Franklin county during the next few days, which will imperil the security that the Indianapolis Art Association feels with reference to the bequest aggregating nearly \$250,000 which was made in the will of the late John Herron. Since the admission on to probate of that instrument the next of kin of the dead philanthropist, assisted by astute detectives and able counsel, here and at

Rushville, have collected the evidence that will be the basis of the suit to set aside the will left by Herron.

The relatives who are interested in the setting aside of the last will and testament of Herron reside in Indiana and Pennsylvania. None of them bear a relationship nearer than that of a second cousin. With no will they would have been entitled to the property and they and their attorneys will endeavor to make it appear that their claim is superior to that of the Art Association. The Indiana relatives are Mrs. West and the six children of her deceased brother; John Harrison of Mount Carmel, Franklin county; John Harrison, of Swayzee, Grant county; and Maggie Johnson, the daughter of Mrs. West, who resides at Dunreith, in Henry county. The Eastern relatives are E. O. Swire, of the wealthy manufacturing firm of Scott & Swire, and his two brothers. The western relatives are as poor as poverty, while the Swires are wealthy people, and they will furnish the sinews of war for prosecuting the case. E.O. Swire, who was in this city a few days ago in consultation with attorneys for the plaintiffs, has made two trips to California, where Herron died, and is confident that the will can be successfully contested.

The grounds upon which the will is to be attacked are mental unsoundness and undue influence, and in showing these things there will be brought into court and placed upon exhibition the usual array of family skeletons. John Herron, the testator, resided in this city up to about a year ago, and most of the property in the controversy is located here. He and his aged wife were childless. The later died in September, 1890. The will bears the date of October 1892, and Herron died in April, 1895. It left \$500 each to several of the plaintiffs named above, and the residue to the Art Association, and a further provision was made that if any of the heirs to whom bequests were made should attempt to contest the will that they should forfeit the sums they were to receive. The plaintiff whose name is to appear in the complaint that is to be filled will be one of the relatives who did not even receive \$500, and hence the modest legacies received by the poor Indiana cousins will not be imperiled, even though the attempt to break the will should be a failure.

WITNESSES FROM CALIFORNIA

Many witnesses will be brought from California to testify as to the mental unsoundness of the testator. The plaintiffs claim that they will show that Herron had fainting spells before the date of the will and that being attacked by one of these he would remain unconscious for three days at a time. He was totally blind at the time of the execution of the will, and there may be an attempt to show that Herron thought he was signing one will when he signed the other. It will be shown, the plaintiffs claim, that he had no taste whatever for art, that he knew nothing whatever of artists or pictures. The plaintiffs will show that Herron was severely economical that stinginess with him was a passion. Evidence will be introduced to show that his aged wife's death was hastened by the lack of proper food and nursing, and that Herron allowed

himself only the barest necessities of life. It is said of him that when he went to the grocery that as he did not require or string to do up the sugar up that he be given the weight of the paper and string in sugar. During his residence n California he lived, it is claimed, some of the time in the poorest quarters, and the remainder of the time in the cheapest boarding houses. This indisposition to let go the thousands that he had accumulated was the immediate cause of his death, it is charged. He insisted on the use of coal oil lamps instead of gas, it will be alleged, because it was cheaper. The lamp exploded, and Herron was so severely burned that death was the result of his injuries.

UNDUE INFLUNCE CHARGED

The person with whom the complaint will charge with having exerted the undue influence, and most of it to procure the construction of the will in the interest of the Art Association, is Miss Anna Terrell, now of this city. Miss Turrell is the stenographer of A. P. Stanton, an Indianapolis attorney, who is also the executor of the will. There will also be an attempt to show that Stanton influenced Herron in the making of the will. The theory of the plaintiffs being that they sought that they sought that he disposition of the estate which promised the most for themselves.

Miss Terrell was a niece of Herron's wife, and under the laws of decent would not have been entitled to any share in the estate if there had been no will. She became a member of the Herron household several years ago, supplanting Maggie Johnson, whose name appears among those who are to profit by the smashing of the Herron testament. The methods by which Miss Terrell integrated herself in the good graces of the old man to the detriment of Maggie Johnson, as the plaintiffs will allege, involves a long story the details of which are not well authenticated, but which will all come out., attorneys for the plaintiff claim, during the progress of the trial. Whatever the methods employed, the fact is that Maggie Johnson was released and Miss Terell accompanied the aged couple to California, where she remained with them as a member of the family, and after the death of Mrs. Herron, John Herron at the next cheap boarding-house that they sought, registered as John Herron and daughter. In addition to the legacy of \$500 which Miss Ferrell and several of the heirs received, she holds the deed form Herron to a piece of property on College avenue, Indianapolis, valued at \$10,000. If the attempt to set aside the will is successful another suit will be entered attacking the deed to this property.

THE PLAINTIFFS' ATTORNEYS

The principal attorney for the plaintiffs will be Congressman James E. Watson, of Rushville, who has thoroughly investigated the case, and who expressed his convection that the will can and will be broken. Associated with him as counsel for the plaintiffs are Judge McBride of this city, an ex-member of the Supreme Bench, Caleb S. Denny, Mayor of Indianapolis, and Morrow & McKee, also of this city.

The announcement that the will is to be contested will not come in the nature of a thunderclap to the Art Association. That organization had an inkling some time ago that its right to the estate was to be contested, and its attorneys have been closely watching the movements of the enemy. The association has its attorneys employed and will make a stiff fight to the wealth that has promised so much for the advancement of the art interests of Indianapolis. The association has appeared to understand from the first that it had inherited a lawsuit as well as an estate, for at the first meeting after the will was probated it was decided that no steps should be taken for a year toward the utilization of the Herron funds, and is easily understood now that this decision was born of the expectation that the association would have to defend a suit to set aside the will. It is interesting to note that the man whose will is to be contested was himself a hater of wills. It is related that when the will of his own father George Herron, one of the first settlers of Franklin county was produced, John Herron seized it when the reading of it was begun and tore it into shreds. The property was then divided between him and his sister, those two being the only heirs,

JOHN HERRON'S WILL VALID.

**It Gives \$200,000 to the Indianapolis
Art Association.**

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., Dec. 4.—The Supreme Court, in the case of William A. Harrison, for the heirs, against Ambrose P. Stanton, executor of the will of John Herron, has affirmed the action of the lower court in dismissing the suit brought to contest Herron's will.

The will gives the bulk of an estate valued at \$200,000 to the Art Association of this city, with small bequests to charities and to intimate friends.

The contestants alleged that Mr. Herron was of unsound mind when his will was made. The Art Association will receive nearly \$200,000.

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John Herron Family Collection of Books

This collection is in the Archives of the Indianapolis Museum of Art

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ENDNOTE:

That John Herron's name is closely associated with Indianapolis, its notable art school, an art institute, a high school and even an apartment house can be described by a single word:

SERENDIPITY

I hope you enjoyed reading “**About John Herron**” as much as I did researching and compiling it. We shall never truly know what motivated Herron to write his will, as it was penned. Reading the little that has been written about him provides some insight as to his character and life style. Analyzing the list of items in his personal library, provides some understanding of what he might have read, that is if and when he ever picked up a book. Yes, he was frugal to the max, and today he might even be labeled as having been a Compulsive Neurotic! But without **SERENDIPITY** few would recognize his name today!

Donald Prell
Palm Springs, CA
January 1, 2016

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